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## THE MORAL TRAINING OF THE YOUNG IN CHINA.\*

This paper refers exclusively to the moral training of boys and young men. In another paper I have explained the peculiar instruction given to Chinese girls and young women.

There is no distinction or difference, of any material character, between ancient and modern times in the line of my topic. What was done or neglected in China ten, twenty, or thirty centuries ago, is done or neglected to-day, and what is true to-day was true then.

As a nation the Chinese are peculiarly given to acts of indirection. That is to say, they are fond of accomplishing results which they do not appear to seek, and of guiding and controlling affairs in which neither guidance nor control is manifest. Thus with their educational system, which in its origin runs back to a point which history fails to record and where even tradition fades into myth, the Imperial Government has apparently no concern and ventures upon no interference. There are no laws or ordinances, either national or local, governing the schools. Superintendents, inspectors, and trustees are unknown. There are no legally prescribed courses of study, no required qualifications for teachers, and no school taxes. Any one may teach what, when, and as he pleases, and collect his own compensation therefor. And yet, as will be seen later, by a system of ultimate examinations, not of the schools but of such individual pupils as desire to submit to them, the Government controls every detail of school life and school work far more easily and effectually than it could by the most elaborate and complicated system of laws and regulations. In education, as in many other matters, it insists upon and exacts certain results, leaving each individual free to determine for

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\*A lecture given in a course on "The Moral Training of the Young in Ancient and Modern Times," under the auspices of the Society for Ethical Culture of Philadelphia.

himself the ways and means by which they shall be accomplished.

Thus both the moral and intellectual training of the youth of China are controlled by the Imperial authorities. It becomes desirable then to have some understanding of the form and characteristics of the government of this most ancient and populous of all nations. This is the more important since, in so doing, we shall reach the center of our subject by the most direct path, and learn most easily the nature and extent of the moral training given to Chinese youth, and the methods and forces by which it is taught and put into practice.

The definition readiest to hand by which to describe the Chinese political system is to call it an absolute despotism, and such is the course commonly taken in our political geographies. But any careful study and observation of the practical operation of the system will make it plain that such characterization is at once uncharitable and inexact. The most enlightened of the Chinese, including those who have studied other political forms and systems, will admit of no such definition. The idea that there is any feature of despotism in the Imperial rule is absolutely foreign to their conception of it. An Englishman of authority says: "China is, in many senses, one vast republic, in which personal restraints have no existence." Another English writer says: "There is really no country in which the administrative functions are more completely decentralized than is the case in China. The people are accustomed to manage their own affairs, and exercise a measure of local self-government which is unparalleled elsewhere." Dr. G. Wells Williams, an eminent American authority, speaks more cautiously, and perhaps with greater correctness, in saying: "The Chinese may be regarded as the only pagan nation which has maintained democratic habits under a purely despotic theory of government." If by the phrase "democratic habits" this learned writer intended to include the actual methods and exercise of political control, then he has correctly described the Chinese governmental system. It furnishes one of those

sharp, startling contrasts which are not uncommon, viz., a vigorously democratic and self-governing nation provided with a nominally despotic head.

Like all potentates not chosen by the voice of the people the Emperor claims to rule by the will of heaven. There is no limit to his authority, no appeal from his commands. There is no legislative body. The laws of the Empire are simply the collected and collated expressions of the personal will and judgment of many Emperors. His word is final and unchangeable. He is the owner in fee simple of every foot of land within the limit of the Empire, of all other property of every sort, and of the muscle, brain and lives of every Chinaman. He has but to nod his head, and the head of any of his subjects may fall—no matter how high in rank or authority—unaccused, untried, and, perhaps, innocent of any wrong. This is the theory of Chinese Imperialism.

In point of fact, however, land tenure is substantially as secure there as in the United States. Real estate is bought and sold, held by recorded title deeds, mortgaged to secure loans, and otherwise dealt with in all respects there as here. The law of entail is unknown. There are no "lords of the soil" holding vast estates and grinding the faces of the tenant poor. The land is divided up into holdings probably smaller than are found in any other country in the world. A land tax, small and graded carefully in each locality according to the fertility of the soil and ease of cultivation, is levied by the government, and, this being paid, the Emperor concerns himself in no way with the ownership of the soil.

There is neither form nor trace of feudalism within the Empire. And there is no titled class or rank of nobility in which the accident of birth affords the right of domination or control over the masses of the people. The few existing titles are purely empty honors carrying with them no authority and no power. They do not entitle a person to hold office. Sons and relatives of the Emperor are not permitted to hold civil or territorial office outside of Peking, the capital; nor, with the exception of the Family Council of State, are they

frequently found in any of the various departments of the Imperial Government. Like the law of entail, the law of primogeniture finds no recognition in China. With one exception, which is a burden rather than an advantage, the eldest son stands upon the same plain of equality with his brothers. This rule applies to the sons of the Emperor and peasant alike.

There is no large standing army, bound by fear or favor to a ruthless enforcement of the Imperial will. Nor is there any great hierarchy, or body of ecclesiastics, to coerce and frighten the populace, by threats of real or imaginary pains or terrors, into subservience to despotic authority. Chinese priests cut no figure in governmental affairs, and possess but a meager influence in matters of religion. There exists, then, no intermediary coercive force between the Emperor and his subjects. His only agents for the enforcement of the Imperial Decrees, the preservation of loyalty and order throughout the Empire, and the general administration of the affairs of State, are the people themselves. From those early days of which myth and tradition form the only source of information, down to the present moment, the successive Emperors of China have always depended directly upon the entire body of their subjects for the practical conduct of government. And this dependence has proved itself to be safe and wise. Since the earliest dawn of time no rebellion against the established order of government has been heard of in China. To-day it is the pride and boast of the entire nation, and no respectable following could be secured for any proposition looking to even a moderate change. In the long centuries of her history there have been a number of uprisings against maladministration of public affairs, and many bloody struggles between rivals for the throne, but not one against the system of control. To the Chinese it represents the perfect governmental type.

The high authority and sacred character of the head of the State comes not from his title of Emperor, but from another—the Son of Heaven. As Heaven is the source of all things, he, as its son, is the father of the nation. He is

not a despot but a parent. And as he is vested with the ancient type of parental authority, so he is responsible to Heaven for the wise control and the health, prosperity, and order of all his theoretical children. This idea of Paternal or Family Government runs like a thread through and fully explains the entire Chinese system. As the Emperor is the father of the nation, Viceroys or Governors, appointed by him, are the fathers of the provinces, over which they are delegated to have authority. The same holds true regarding the heads of smaller political subdivisions until finally the village and the family are reached.

The family, and not the individual, is the unit and model of government in China. The head of each is vested, both by custom and the laws of the Empire, with the same almost unlimited authority which the Emperor is supposed to have received from Heaven. He is vice-regent of his own household, and is held in turn strictly accountable for the peace, order, good conduct and moral instruction of all members of it. Innumerable instances might be cited in which parents and grandparents have been subjected to punishment, and even to the penalty of death, for the crimes of their descendants. The entire Chinese theory of government is based upon the divine right and duty of a father to control and instruct his children, and his responsibility to the nation for them.

Next to the family comes the village community. And here is seen the living center of the Chinese political system. Here is the democratic, self-governing body, over which the Emperor is the nominal head. Each has what may be termed an unofficial board of control composed of the old men, who choose a leader or "headman" from their number. All municipal affairs are controlled by them. They are expected to provide a public school, suitable police, good roads and bridges, and any needed public buildings. They are responsible to the authorities for the payment of the taxes due by members of the community, and for the maintenance of order and good government. They settle disputes among the villager, act as mediators or arbitrators in many private

quarrels, and see to it that the young people of both sexes are properly behaved and disciplined. What funds they may need for public use are raised by voluntary subscription. They are permitted to inflict penalties for petty offences, and are held accountable and punished for turbulence or other misconduct of members of their community. So long as taxes are paid and a reasonable degree of order maintained they are never interfered with by the Imperial authorities.

In these tiny communes or municipalities, existing everywhere through the Empire, rest the actual authority and control of the nation. Local self-government is the keynote of Chinese administration. In a thousand and one ways by which the peoples of America and Europe are hedged in, protected, limited, restrained, regulated, directed, and ruled by the State, the people of China are untrammelled and free, at least so far as the law, authority, or interference of the Emperor or his deputies are concerned. At the same time the administration of government over such an enormous population requires a very large number of officials. How, and upon what basis of fitness and proficiency, are these deputy fathers of the people, in all the varying grades from a petty magistrate to a Prime Minister of State, chosen? The answer is easy. Education among the Chinese forms the essential and only condition to official life and honor. The public school has, for an unrecorded number of centuries, been the sole gateway to public office. It may not be said to have been established for that exclusive purpose, but it has been shaped mainly to that end. In the minds of the people, its chief object from the beginning has been to provide suitable candidates for the public service. And, with their fondness for terse sayings, the Chinese have condensed this governmental practice, and the national motive and object of study, into four words, *Nien shu, tso Kuan*, "Acquire an education, and thus become a ruler of the people."

The Government has done much to foster and encourage this ambition. While it has nothing to do with the school system, it exercises most rigid control of the literary exam-

inations, both regarding the subjects upon which students are tested, and the methods under which they are conducted. The schools are absolutely free, but the examinations are under the closest Governmental supervision. They are conducted with great pomp and display. Officials of high rank and distinguished scholarship are appointed by the Emperor to preside over them. Special honors, and assurance of rapid promotion in the public service, await those who pass with distinction. Financial assistance is given to poor students to enable them to attend the examinations; those who fail once, or even many times, are at liberty and are urged to continue their studies and efforts to<sup>s</sup> pass; and all who succeed are granted certain privileges and exemptions which place them in a distinguished and honored class, separate from and above the common people.

With ignorance as the only bar to admission to and preferment in the Governmental service; with this one path—through the village school-house—open and unobstructed to poor and rich alike, and leading to the highest honors in the gift of the throne, is it any wonder that the people are satisfied with their Government; that they seek not to destroy but to enter it, and that the chief ambition of every Chinese boy, no matter how poor, ragged, and beggarly his condition may be, is to go to school? Is it any wonder that the phrase just mentioned—*Nien shu tso Kuan*—is in the mouths of all parents as an incentive to their children, and that they strive and, if need be, starve, quite like many American parents, to give their sons an education? Is it any wonder that the youngster who has gained his first degree at the Government examinations is the pride and admiration of his family and the envy of his village, and that others who have tried and failed are cheered and encouraged to make further efforts? And is it any wonder that—as in America so in China—the great men of the nation, the actual rulers of the Empire, have with few exceptions come from among the very poor—have been those whose brains and bodies alike were exercised, stiffened, and developed by hardship and compulsory effort when young?



It is impossible to determine with accuracy the time when these official examinations were established. It is known that they were in force about 200 A. D., and that they were revised and shaped into their present form by the celebrated Emperor Tai Tsung about 600 A. D. They have therefore been conducted along present lines for some thirteen centuries. It is equally impossible to discover the date in the remote past when an educational system was founded. The *Li Chi*, or "Book of Rites," which dates back, as is well known, to 1200 B. C., declares that, "For the purpose of education among the ancients, villages had their schools, districts their academies, departments their colleges, and provinces their universities." If a record, written thirty-one centuries ago, speaks of such institutions as having existed in times even then ancient, the attention of the Chinese must have been turned toward learning at a very early period indeed. And the character of the learning acquired in the very dawn of time may be inferred from an extract translated from the *Shu Ching*, or "Book of History," which antedated the "Book of Rites" by a number of centuries. Only some eleven chapters of this most ancient work are now known, and they are entirely occupied with the relative duties of Prince and people, pointing out that the welfare of all is dependent upon mutual faithfulness. One passage reads as follows:

"Order your affairs by righteousness, order your heart by propriety, so shall you transmit a great example to posterity. I have heard the saying, He who finds instructors for himself comes to the supreme dominion; he who says that others are not equal to himself comes to ruin. He who likes to ask becomes enlarged; he who uses only himself becomes small. He who would take care for his end, must be attentive to his beginning. There is establishment for those who observe propriety, and overthrow for the blinded and wantonly indifferent. To revere and honor the way of Heaven is the way ever to preserve the favoring regard of Heaven."

If more is needed to demonstrate the fact that China had a system of education and a literature of high quality in the very beginning of history, it is only necessary to refer to the fact that there was an immense mass of ancient literature in the time of Confucius, and that this profound thinker and

insatiable student confessedly drew all of his inspiration and knowledge from ancient books and writings. Of the entire list of text-books with which the Chinese student is required to make himself familiar, not one was written less than seven hundred years ago, while those which are regarded as of highest importance were prepared long before the birth of Christ.

Coming now to an examination of the text-books invariably and universally used in Chinese schools, the first, or primer of the list, is known as the *San Tz Ching*, or "Trimetrical Classic." It was prepared by a teacher for use in his private school, in A. D. 1050, and may be bought in any village in the Empire for about two cents. It is in poetry, or doggerel, as the name implies, and contains 1,068 words. It has been translated into Latin, French, German, Russian, and Portuguese, and a paraphrase of it is used by the Protestant, Roman, and Greek Catholic missionaries in their schools in China. It has been much commended by distinguished native writers, one of whom calls it "a ford which the youthful enquirer may readily pass, and thereby reach the fountain head—the higher courses of learning." It opens with a widely disputed assertion of the nature of man, and the importance and value of education. Carefully translated quotations will best show the character of the little book. The first twelve lines run as follows:

"Men at their birth are by nature radically good;  
Though alike in this, in practice they widely diverge.  
If not educated, the natural character grows worse;  
A course of education is made valuable by close attention.  
Of old, Mencius' mother selected a residence,  
And when her son did not learn, cut the half-woven web.  
To nurture and not educate is a father's error;  
To educate without rigor shows a teacher's indolence.  
That boys should not learn is an unjust thing;  
For if they do not learn in youth, what will they do when old?  
As gems unwrought serve no useful end,  
So men untaught will never know what right conduct is."

Following this introduction, filial and fraternal duties are taught by precept and example. Then succeeds an arrangement, of which the Chinese are very fond, of the various

branches of learning in an ascending numerical scale; the three great powers; four seasons and four cardinal points; five elements and five constant virtues—humanity, justice, propriety, wisdom, and truth; then the six kinds of grain and six domestic animals; the seven passions; eight materials for music; nine grades of kindred, and ten social duties. The verse which recites the last may well be given as an example of the whole:

“Mutual affection of father and son, concord of man and wife;  
The elder brothers—kindness, the younger ones—respect;  
Order between seniors and juniors, friendship among associates;  
On the Prince’s part regard, on the Minister’s true loyalty;  
These ten moral duties are ever binding among men.”

The volume concludes with incentives to study, drawn from the conduct and lives of ancient sages and statesmen and from motives of interest and ambition. The name of the author of this ancient text-book—which has been studied by hundreds of millions of children—has been, solely on account of it, a household word for many centuries. The last four lines of his book are as follows:

“Some for their offspring, leave coffers filled with gold,  
While I, to teach children, leave this one little book.  
Diligence has merit! Play yields no profit.  
Be ever on your guard! Rouse all your energies!”

While there are manifest imperfections in this primary volume of instruction, it is pure and elevated in morals, and the counsel which it gives is sound and good. It has exerted an immense influence upon the Chinese nation.

When the school boy has committed the contents of this primer to memory and learned to read and write each character, or word, in it, the *Po Chia Hsing*, or “Book of One Hundred Family Names,” is placed in his hands. It is written in verse, and, as the name implies, contains nothing more than a list of the one hundred surnames recognized in the Empire, with four hundred and fifty additional characters which may also be employed as names. It conveys neither moral instruction nor connected sense, yet must be thor-

oughly memorized, and each word in it must be studied until it can be correctly pronounced and written.

Following this comes the *Chien Tz Wen*, or "Book of a Thousand Words." It is a most remarkable volume and could be produced in no other language than the Chinese since it contains exactly one thousand characters, none being repeated, no two being alike in meaning, yet the whole forming connected sentences and embodying sound instruction. The history of this book is interesting. It was written about A. D. 550, by a Minister of State who had been requested by the Emperor to select this number of characters which he, the Emperor, would form into a poem. The thousand characters were accordingly furnished in the shape in which they appear in this little volume. The delighted monarch did not undertake to construct his poem and rewarded the Minister with many valuable presents. And business men in China, always practical, make use of the characters contained in the book to list and identify boxes and parcels, instead of using numerals, which would require more room. Those who may have puzzled over the hieroglyphics found upon a Chinese laundry ticket will find the duplicate of it in this "Book of a Thousand Words." Since no character occurs twice, there is no possibility of confusion.

The contents of this volume resemble closely the text-book first studied, though having a wider range. The productions of nature, virtues of the early monarchs, the power and capacities of man, his social duties and mode of conduct, with many instructions as to the proper manner of life, all these are concisely dealt with. A short extract will give a fair idea of the whole.

"Now this our human body is endowed with four great powers and five cardinal virtues. Preserve with reverence what your parents nourished. How dare you destroy or injure it!

"Observe and imitate the conduct of the virtuous, and command your thoughts that you may be wise. Your virtue once fixed, your reputation will be established; your habits once rectified, your example will be correct. Sounds are reverberated in the deep valleys, and the empty hall re-echoes all it hears. So misery is the penalty of accumulated vice, and happiness the reward of illustrious virtue.

'A cubit of jade stone is not to be valued, but an inch of time you should contend for.'

Next comes "Odes to Children," a poetical work of thirty-four verses, containing four lines each. It is a description and praise of a literary life, alluding incidentally to the beauties of nature and changes of the seasons. Here is a translation of two verses:

"It is of the utmost importance to educate children; do not say that your families are poor, for those who can handle well the pencil (or pen), go where they will, need never ask for favors."

"A passage for the sea has been cut through mountains, and stones have been melted to repair the heavens. In all the world there is nothing impossible. It is the heart of man alone that lacks resolution."

When the short task furnished by this little volume is accomplished, the student takes up the *Hsiao Ching*, or "Classic of Filial Piety." This is accounted to be the root of all virtues among the Chinese. The book purports to be a record of conversations between Confucius and one of his followers. Many commentaries upon it have been written, one notably by the Emperor Yuan Tsung in A. D. 733, containing one hundred chapters, and another written some two and a half centuries ago which filled no less than thirty-two volumes. The work, containing less than 2,000 words, has had a great and lasting influence upon the Chinese people. It is divided into sections, and a sentence or two from the first and fifth sections will serve as fair specimens of the work:

*"On the Origin and Nature of Filial Duty:* Filial duty is the root of virtue, and the stem from which instruction in the moral principle springs. Sit down and I will explain this to you. The first thing which filial duty requires of us is, that we should carefully preserve from all injury and in a perfect state, the bodies which we have received from our parents.

*"On the Attention of Scholars to Filial Duty:* With the same love that they serve their fathers, they should serve their mothers; and with the same respect that they serve their fathers, they should serve their Prince. Unmixed love, then, will be the offering that they make to their mothers; unfeigned respect, the tribute they bring to their Prince; while toward their fathers both these will be combined."

The last volume to be mastered by the Chinese pupil in what may be termed primary instruction, that is, before

entering upon the study of the Confucian Classics, is called the "Juvenile Instructor," and was prepared by one of the most distinguished authors of any age or time within the Empire. There have been more than fifty commentaries written upon it, each, if possible, being more eulogistic than the other. One writer says, "We confide in the 'Juvenile Instructor' as we do in the gods, and revere it as we do our parents." It is divided into two books, the first being called "The Fountain of Learning" and the second "The Stream Flowing from It." The first treats of the principles of education; of the duties we owe our ruler, kindred, and fellow-men; of those which we owe to ourselves in regard to study, demeanor, food, and dress; and gives many examples, from early times down to two and a half centuries before Christ, of the observance of the lessons taught in the book, and the good effects which have resulted therefrom. The second book contains a collection of the wise sayings of eminent men who lived subsequent to 200 B. C., and a series of examples of distinguished persons which are intended to show the effects of sound principles.

Such is the matter and course of primary instruction in Chinese schools. Aside from the purely mechanical drill of the memory, and learning to read and write, it contains little which is found in western systems of education. No mathematics and no science, however rudimentary, are taught, no language aside from the native tongue. Such stray bits of history and geography as are found in the various textbooks examined are there quite incidentally, and only because they serve to illustrate or enforce some point of far higher importance to the student. This preliminary system of education is wholly ethical—is intended to be and is moral in its entire scope and application to the young. Not to communicate knowledge or learning, but to mold character, to instil right principles of action and conduct, is evidently the object of the Chinese common school. The boy who has completed the course taught there will, of necessity, be possessed of far less general information than the pupils in any similar western institution, but he is likely to know better

how to behave and carry himself. The ethical training given is sound, pure, and good.

Our path has now brought us to the goal of all paths in China, no matter what the line or object of their course, to the most conspicuous figure in the history and affairs of that Empire, to the sage and statesman, Confucius. He was the embodiment of a force which more than any other, perhaps more than all others combined, has shaped the institutions of China, controlled the policy of the Government, and determined the character and destiny of the people. It is a fact beyond dispute that the Chinese sage has influenced the conduct and guided the lives of a larger number of human beings than any other man known in the world's history. For more than two thousand years he has been final authority in all matters, public and private, to a race which to-day numbers more than four hundred millions. Let any one interested in the problem determine the aggregate population of China in that long stretch of time, and he will realize to what an enormous mass of humanity Confucius has been leader, guide, and master.

Nor is there any sufficient indication of the decadence of his authority. He is still the moving and steadying spirit which dominates the Chinese nation. It is idle to ignore this fact, and extremely indiscreet on the part of any person who seeks to know the Chinese in order to influence them for their good. To understand the framework and system of government or the social organization and moral character of the nation, it is necessary to study Confucius. To come into touch with the mental attitude and modes of thought of the ignorant and the scholarly alike, to discover the secret of the power of the leaders, and the confirmed, not to say obstinate, conservatism of those who follow, one must study Confucius. For an explanation of the fact that the average Chinaman looks backward instead of forward, and finds his golden ideals in the dead past rather than in a future glowing with life, study Confucius. To gain the secret of the quietness and patience of the nation under vicious rule, examine the teachings of Confucius. To quiet a mob or gain a Chi-

nese friend quote the ancient sage, and assume familiarity with his teachings. In short, Confucius and his instructions form what may be termed a "universal solvent" of all Chinese mysteries; a pass-key to every hidden nook and secret closet in the mind and life of the nation which recognizes him as lord and paramount leader.

Confucius was a poor boy of obscure parentage—born 550 B. C. His father died when he was three years old, and he was brought up by his mother. In his youth he did what all poor boys in any land may do, sought any work, however menial, by which he might aid his mother, and secure an education. As a student the subjects which interested him most appear to have been music, poetry, and the history, rites, and rules of government in ancient times. Throughout his life he strongly repudiated the idea that he sought to inaugurate any new theory or system, and to quote his own words, persistently declared himself to be "a transmitter and not a maker."

When twenty-two years of age Confucius opened a school, not of boys, but of men, young like himself, who wished to be taught the principles of right conduct and government. It was, in fact, an institution for the study of social and political ethics. And this was maintained, with varying fortunes, throughout his life. It was not always held in the city of his birth, for Confucius spent many weary years wandering from one capital to another, accompanied by his disciples. The feudal system, suppressed about 220 B. C. by the famous Emperor under whose orders the great wall was built, was at its height in the time of Confucius. Princes ruled different sections of the Empire, and the authority of the Emperor was only nominal. It was the ambition of the sage that some one of these feudal chiefs should accept him as master, or teacher, for a term of years, and follow his instructions in the management of public affairs. Once he said: "If any ruler would submit to me as his director for twelve months, I should accomplish much. In three years I should attain the realization of my hopes." But rulers were no readier then to submit to be controlled by wise men than their suc-



cessors are to-day. No one made use of his services. He was discredited, treated with contempt and persecuted, and more than once his life was in danger.

As a teacher Confucius can hardly be described as either patient or helpful. While he rejected no student who could pay even the smallest fee, he retained none who were stupid or slow. He said once: "When I have presented one corner of a subject, and the pupil, of himself, cannot make out the other three, I do not repeat my lesson." He was fond of speaking in enigmas or riddles, and appears often to have furnished his disciples with far less than "one corner of the subject." Some of his dark sayings have remained without interpretation into intelligible language down to the present day. His method of instruction appears to have been entirely conversational. And while he constantly appealed to and quoted ancient authorities, any occurrence, no matter how trivial, might form the subject of a lesson. Once he said: "I never meet two men upon the highway but I find one teacher." From a remark made by a woman weeping by the roadside he taught the dangers to be feared from a violent and oppressive government. From the churlish answer of a recluse, Confucius taught the absurdity of withdrawal from the world because of the evils found therein. "With whom shall I associate," said he, "but with suffering men. The disorder that prevails is what requires my efforts." An example of the peculiarly terse and sententious methods of his instruction may be given. Upon one occasion, being asked what he would consider the first thing to be done if entrusted with the government of a state, he replied: "The rectification of names." Being told that such an answer was wide of the mark, he insisted upon it, but made no explanation. However, upon another occasion, he told a feudal prince that good government obtained when the ruler was ruler, and the minister was minister; when the father was father, and the son was son. Society, he explained, was made of five relationships: ruler and subject, husband and wife, father and son, elder brother and younger, and friends. Hence when each person in all his conduct was true to his

place in each of these relationships, then good government obtained, and "the rectification of names" was complete. The entire political and social system of Confucius was wrapped up in that phrase.

It is necessary to call attention to, and to emphasize, the fact that the theories and teachings of the great Chinese sage were entirely secular. They deal exclusively with the relations and duties of man to man in this life, and neither bore reference to or made account of a higher Being, or Beings, or a future state of existence. Yet the idea has spread widely that he sought to establish a cult or religious system, which is far from the fact, and "three great Chinese religions" are spoken of, namely, Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism. Buddhism and Taoism are exotic forms of belief, neither being indigenous to the Empire, and there is no such thing as a Confucian faith, or system of religious belief. Confucius himself could not be called a religious man; he was a moralist. His disciples have left upon record four subjects upon which he seldom spoke. One of these was spiritual beings and a future state. In answer to a question from a Minister of State as to what constituted wisdom, the sage replied: "To give oneself earnestly to the duties due to men, and while respecting spiritual beings, if there are such, to keep aloof from them—this may be called wisdom." Being asked by a disciple concerning ancestral worship which then, as now, was universal in China, he answered: "While you cannot serve men, how can you serve spirits?" Asked by the same disciple concerning a future state, he replied with the counter question: "While you do not know life, what can you know about death?" In order then to gain any just conception of the Confucian system as a whole, and to determine the position to which the founder of it is entitled in the list of the world's great leaders, it is essential to eliminate the idea that it was, in any sense of the phrase, a cult, superstition, or form of religious, or idolatrous, worship. It was no nearer akin to these than are the theories of John Stuart Mill or Herbert Spencer.

The "Confucian Classics," as they are called, are composed

of nine books, divided by the Chinese themselves by a familiar name, into "Five Classics and Four Books." Confucius himself wrote but very little. Aside from the classic called the "Annals of Spring and Autumn," he is not certainly known to have written anything. He left no detailed statement of the principles upon which his moral and social system is based. He did not claim any divine revelation which should be placed upon record as a guide to future ages of men. He declared that he was not born with knowledge, but was fond of antiquity and earnest in seeking knowledge there. He insisted that the rule of life for men, in all their relations, existed within themselves, but the right development of it was to be found in the teachings and institutions of the ancient sages. Hence, rather than elaborate theories of his own, he rescued from oblivion and arranged the earlier records.

Of the Five Classics already mentioned, the first in the order of antiquity is the "Classic of History." It covers the history of China from the twenty-fourth to the eighth century before Christ, and was collated by Confucius from more than one hundred different records. It is not history in our meaning of the word. The second is the "Classic of Poetry." It contains three hundred and five Chinese poems, selected by the sage from some three thousand then in existence, and which had been written between the twenty-fourth and sixth centuries B. C. The third in order is the "Classic of Changes." It was prepared in 1185 B. C. by a feudal prince while in prison, and Confucius had no part in the preservation of it. It is geomantic in character and utterly unintelligible to native and foreign scholars alike. The fourth is the "Book of Rites," collated more than a century after the death of the sage, from materials prepared by him and his immediate disciples. The fifth, and last, the "Annals of Spring and Autumn," was prepared by Confucius, as has been said, and is a continuation of the "Classic of History."

The "Four Books," included in the Confucian Classics, which have played a most important part in forming the Chinese mind and character, and in extending the influence

of the sage, were none of them prepared by him or during his lifetime. They are, to speak concisely, interpretations of the master, prepared by his disciples. The first is called "The Great Learning," and is divided under four heads, which treat, respectively, of "the improvement of one's self, the regulation of a family, the government of a State, and the rule of an Empire." The title of the second is almost or quite untranslatable into English. It has been variously called "The Invariable Mean," "The Doctrine of the Mean," and "The Just Medium." Literally rendered the title reads "The Middle Course or Way," and this, perhaps, is as satisfactory a translation as any. The virtue which is especially illustrated and enforced in the volume is that of "unswerving moderation." It was written by a grandson of Confucius, about ninety years after the death of the latter. The third of the Four Books, and by far the most important in the information which it gives of the life and teachings of the master, is entitled the "Analects of Confucius." It was prepared by his disciples shortly after his death. The fourth, last, and largest, is composed entirely of the teachings of Mencius, the great interpreter and apostle of his greater master.

These nine works constitute what may be termed the academic or advanced course in the Chinese educational scheme. The system of instruction followed with them is identical with that pursued during the primary course. Each character, or word, must be thoroughly memorized—there are at least half a million of them—and each student must learn to read and write them, and to expound their meaning. This work completed, his student days are finished. He is the polished and educated gentleman, ready for the Governmental examinations, and the highest service and honor within the gift of the Emperor. Such, for many centuries, has been the scholastic itinerary of the Chinese youth, and they have labored through its clouds, and fogs, and mazes, up to the glittering stars which have crowned their ambition.

The object and scope of the training given during this advanced portion of the educational course, differ in no important measure from that of the primary school. The

most careful instruction is given in composition and probably the most finished masters of style to be found anywhere in the world must be looked for among the Chinese. Much attention is also given to versification. China is emphatically the land of hand labor, and the only machine-made product found there is poetry. Still the empire possesses a very considerable list of genuine poets whose work would be an honor to any language or nation. With these additions, the methods and purpose of study remain the same in the academic as in the primary department.

The difficulties attendant upon the transference of ideas of one race, time, and language to another, extend far beyond the mere question of exact verbal equivalents, though even these are frequently not to be found. Much misconception and unjust criticism of what Confucius intended to teach, much narrowing and distortion of his ethical system, have resulted from these difficulties. As has been said, the sage was sententious, terse, and often enigmatic in his instructions. He was fond of packing an entire department of moral philosophy into a single word or phrase, which was not infrequently left unexplained. As was the case with another and greater teacher, his disciples seldom understood him. There are three characters, or words, which occur so frequently in the ethical system of this great master, and upon which he laid so much stress and significance, that, together they may be safely be said to furnish the foundation and framework of the entire fabric. Understand them as he understood them, and you know Confucianism as the master knew it.

The first and most important of these words is "*li*." It may be termed the bed-rock upon which rests the entire system of social and political ethics, as taught by the Chinese sage. It is constantly in the mouth of every Chinaman to-day, as it has been for many centuries, as the final criterion and authority discriminating between right and wrong. It furnishes the distinctive title of one of the Confucian Classics already mentioned. There is no single word or sentence in our tongue competent to fully embody the meaning of it.

It is generally translated as "ceremony" or "rites"; and out of this mistranslation has grown a sweeping condemnation of the entire teachings of the sage. It has been inferred that, with him, everything depended upon form, that if the external appearance and conduct were decorous and correct, it mattered not what the internal conditions might be. Nothing could be further from the fact. This Chinese character, thus belittled and robbed of all but form in the process of transference into English, means far more than ceremony or ritual, more than the appearance of courtesy, good breeding, and correct deportment. Probably the nearest equivalent phrase in our language is "the principles of correct living." *Li* means the primary and the ultimate law of right action, and implies doing the right thing at the right time, in the right way, and from the right motive. No moral training based upon this word, and enforcing the constant practice of it, can be far wrong.

The second word was given by the master in conversation. He was asked if there was any one word which would serve as a rule of practice in all the relations of life. To which he replied: "Is not *"shu"* such a word? Then, fortunately, he explained his meaning by giving that famous Golden Rule: "What you do not wish that others should do unto you, do not unto them." The word *"shu"* is translated by the English word "reciprocity"; it needs no argument to show that "reciprocity," as commonly understood, is not equivalent to the Golden Rule of either Christ or Confucius. The Chinese character, *"shu,"* includes consideration, charity, forbearance, thoughtfulness for others, mutuality of rights and interests. It covers the entire principles of the brotherhood of man put into practice. The English equivalent, as used among us, involves only the commercial idea of "give and take."

The third word which played a most prominent part in the conversations between Confucius and his disciples, and which, correctly interpreted and understood, will furnish the key to much of his teaching, is *"Chün tz."* There is a wide divergence among sinologues as to a suitable translation.

It has been interpreted as "the princely man," "the superior man," "the mean or moderate man," and by a variety of other phrases. It is quite evident from his many descriptive remarks concerning the "*Chün tz*," that by this expression Confucius meant the ideal man, the perfected type of manhood. While hunting far afield, and finding only a misfit phrase, these translators have overlooked one close at home which does fully embody and convey the idea of the sage. "The gentleman," in the highest, truest, broadest meaning of the word, is the modern type of the Confucian *Chün tz*. A short quotation from the description of such a person, given by Confucius himself, will make this plain:

"The gentleman, in dealing with others, does not descend to anything low or improper. The gentleman enters into no situation where he is not himself. If he holds a high station, he does not treat with contempt those below him; if he occupies an inferior position, he uses no mean arts to gain the favor of his superiors. He corrects himself and blames not others; he feels no dissatisfaction. On the one hand, he murmurs not at Heaven; nor on the other, does he harbor resentment towards man. Hence the gentleman dwells at ease, entirely waiting the Heavenly will."

Thus far the course of moral training as given in Chinese schools to the practical exclusion of all other education, has been followed and explained. Before summing up and concluding this paper, a brief reference must be made to another effort, only less influential than the ethics of Confucius, in shaping and controlling the lives of the young. The Emperor Kang Hsi, who ruled China for some sixty years, than whom no wiser, more faithful, and patriotic monarch has occupied any throne in either ancient or modern times, prepared during his reign a series of sixteen essays of a politico-moral character for the guidance of his subjects. They were called "The Sacred Edicts." They were not to be used as text-books in schools, but, upon the first and fifteenth of each month, the old men of each hamlet, village, and ward or other division of cities throughout the Empire, were commanded to summon all the young men within their jurisdiction, and to read and expound portions of these essays in course. This has been done for more than two hundred years to the great advantage of the people and the quiet and order of the

nation. The topics treated are placed at the head of the essays and the list runs as follows:

1. Pay just regard to filial and fraternal duties, in order to give due importance to the relations of life.
2. Respect kindred, in order to display the excellence of harmony.
3. Let concord abound among those dwelling in the same neighborhood, thereby preventing litigation.
4. Give the chief place to husbandry and culture of the mulberry, that adequate supplies of food and raiment be secured.
5. Esteem economy, that money be not lavishly wasted.
6. Magnify academic learning, in order to direct the scholar's progress.
7. Degrade strange religions, in order to exalt orthodox doctrines.
8. Explain the laws, in order to warn the ignorant and obtuse.
9. Illustrate the principles of a polite and conciliatory bearing, in order to improve manners.
10. Attend to necessary duties, in order to give determination to the will of the people.
11. Instruct the youth, in order to restrain them from evil.
12. Suppress false accusations, in order to protect the innocent.
13. Warn those who hide deserters from the army, that they may not be involved in punishment.
14. Make full payment of taxes, in order to avoid frequent urging.
15. Let constabulary and people unite to extirpate robbery and theft.
16. Settle all quarrels, that lives may be properly valued.

After all that has been said, there is neither time nor occasion to add much regarding the details or quality of the moral training of the Chinese youth. It is, in form and substance, the Confucian system of ethics taught to the exclusion of all other education. It is based upon the five relationships already named. The Chinese sage had found in the ancient records the following declaration made by a king and hero twelve hundred years before he was born: "The great God has conferred upon the people a moral sense, compliance with which would show their nature to be invariably right. To give them tranquillity in which to pursue the course indicated by it, is the task of the Sovereign." Confucius accepted this statement as entirely correct and upon it, as a corner-stone, erected his system. His teachings were elevated and pure, free from word or idea which might possibly corrupt the thoughts of men. He claimed that uprightness and harmony were the basis of all things good, and that, when they were everywhere operative, mankind



would reach perfection. He was strongly opposed to war and to standing armies, and taught the rulers of China to conquer their enemies by showing the excellence of good government. And the Chinese to-day, whether taken *en masse* or as individuals, are the most peace-loving race in the world. Nowhere is that beatitude, "Blessed are the peacemakers," held so highly in honor and obedience.

In the elaboration of his theories, he took the family as the unit of humanity, and regarded all men as grouped into one vast household. He gave the most minute and varied instructions for the nurture and education of children, laid great stress upon filial duty, and prescribed detailed rules of courtesy and conduct for the government of all ranks and classes. The principal figure in all of his instructions was the "*Chün tz*," or gentleman, and no higher type may be produced by any code or system of ethical training. Dignity, moderation, self-restraint, fortitude, and sincerity were to be his characteristics, and the *golden rule* the law of his intercourse with his fellows.

With few exceptions, every peculiarity and every virtue in the social or political forms, customs, and usages of the Chinese, may be traced back to Confucius, their hero, master, and sage. It is a wonderful and pathetic sight, this vision of a vast empire, the oldest and by far the largest in the world, with one impulse modeling itself, generation after generation, and century upon century, upon the pattern framed by one man, dead so long ago. Claiming to be only a man, ranked by his followers as only the wisest of men, Confucius has held the obedience and loving devotion of his entire race for more than twenty centuries. The counterpart to it has not been, and is not, seen elsewhere upon earth.

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